



CWHS

Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Limitation in the ability to perform usual activities can occur due to disease, physical impairment or mental illness. Temporary activity limitation is usually due to conditions of limited duration, to short-lived situations that limit available time for activity, or to the occurrence of a major life event such as birth of a child or death in the family. As women grow older, activity limitation occurs more often or becomes permanent and is more often due to health conditions. Although most adapt well to these changes, limitation in the ability to perform basic activities such as bathing, dressing, or eating can threaten a woman's ability to live independently.

The 1998 California Women's Health Survey asked women about six types of activity limitation: **"During the last four weeks, has your health limited: vigorous activities (e.g., lifting heavy objects, strenuous sports); moderate activities (e.g., moving a table, carrying groceries); the ability to walk up a hill or climb several flights of stairs; bending, lifting, or stooping; walking**

one block; eating, dressing, bathing, or using the toilet?" Limitation in any of the first three activities were categorized as minor limitation. Limitation in the latter three activities, which are essential to independent living, were categorized as a major limitation. Women were also asked the most important reason for their activity limitation.

Overall, 32% of the women in the survey reported one or more limited activities. Activity limitation was more common among women of older ages. The main reasons for activity limitations were back or neck problems (22%), pregnancy (8%), arthritis (6%), broken bones (5%), and the flu (5%).

For each of the six activities, older women (ages 65+) reported the most limitation, followed by middle-aged women (ages 45-64) and younger women (ages 18-44). Virtually all younger women with recent limitation in the ability to walk one block or to eat, bathe, or dress reported pregnancy or back/neck problems as the reason.

ACTIVITY LIMITATION AMONG CALIFORNIA WOMEN, 1998

CMRI (California
Medical Review, Inc.)

Percentage of Women Who have Limitations by Age
and by Type of Limitation, California, 1998

	Older (65+)	Middle Age (45-64)	Younger (18-44)
Vigorous activities	41%	31%	23%
Moderate activities	56%	57%	45%
Walk up hill or stairs	46%	46%	30%
Bend, lift or stoop	25%	17%	13%
Walk one block	13%	9%	4%
Eat, dress, bathe	6%	5%	4%